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ABSTRACT

This document describes the programs and services offered by the Houston READ Commission (HRC), a nonprofit urban literacy coalition created by the Mayor and City Council of the Greater Houston area. After highlighting what HRC provides for the community, the document provides brief descriptions of general programs and services, talks about the Speaker's Bureau and Community Awareness Team, describes the Teacher Training Institute, and lists facts, figures, and other information about the various Learning Centers and Special Programs. (NKA)

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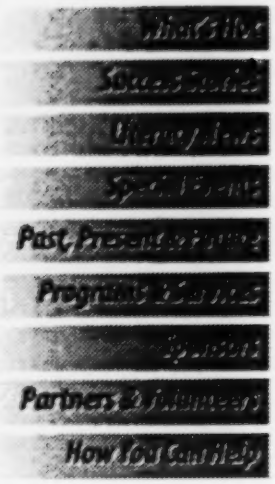

5330 Griggs Road, #75
Houston, Texas 77021

The Houston READ Commission, a nonprofit urban literacy coalition, created by the Mayor and City Council to coordinate adult and family literacy services in the Greater Houston area.

HOUSTON READ COMMISSION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

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Houston READ Commission

Programs & Services

What HRC does for the community

- Coordinates the coalition of community service providers;
- Initiates collaborative programs to make free literacy services accessible to adults and families in inner-city neighborhoods, homeless shelters and at the workplace;
- Operates demonstration learning centers, including sites designed specifically for family and workplace literacy (programs offered in basic skills, pre-GED, GED and English as a Second Language);
- Provides free training for tutors and instructors;
- Forges public/private-sector partnerships to sponsor literacy programs and public awareness activities;
- Tracks the progress of literacy program participants through its central database to measure the effectiveness of services and help students achieve their goals;
- Raises needed resources to support and coordinate literacy services in Houston;
- Maintains the city-wide literacy helpline to place students and tutors in programs; and
- Advocates to local, state, and federal agencies and the business community to enhance awareness of the literacy problem in our state and nation.

Find out more about the Houston READ Commission's services and programs.

- **GENERAL PROGRAMS & SERVICES**
  Brief descriptions of our programs

- **SPEAKER'S BUREAU & COMMUNITY AWARENESS TEAM**
  About the team

- **THE TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE**
Houston READ Commission/HCCS

- **LEARNING CENTERS**
And Special Programs

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Houston READ Commission
Programs & Services

HELPLINE/INFORMATION & REFERRAL SYSTEM

A city-wide telephone "Helpline" connects adult learners and volunteers with programs that will best meet their needs. In 1993, a sophisticated, multi-user, relational database program was implemented that provides on-line referral of student to program, an electronic bulletin board to enhance communication between and among literacy provider agencies, tracking of students from agency to agency, the ability to measure student progress and a means of organizing and advertising the diverse training opportunities available in the city.

DEMONSTRATION LEARNING SITES

By city mandate, the Houston READ Commission (HRC) operates demonstration learning sites utilizing the practice of learner-centered instruction. Learning centers offer programs in basic literacy and life skills, pre-GED and GED (high school equivalency), English as a second language and job readiness/pre-employment skills training as well as specialized programs for family and workplace literacy.

WORKPLACE LITERACY

The HRC offers workplace literacy programs to help improve Houston's workforce and to contribute to the economic development of the city. Programs are developed upon request and are customized to help employers increase productivity, improve customer and employee relations, expand the pool of promotable employees, raise job satisfaction and boost a company's bottom line. The HRC's expertise is supported by a successful, collaborative program operated by the HRC for employees of Maxwell House Coffee, Snider Tires, and a community development project in the medical center.

FAMILY LITERACY

In July 1995, with initial funding from the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, the HRC opened the Good Neighbor Family Literacy Program at the Good Neighbor Healthcare Center in Houston's Fourth Ward. The HRC also operates a family literacy program for residents of the Star of Hope's Transitional Living Center, Casa Juan Diego Women's Shelter, and several other area elementary and middle schools. Programs endeavor to break the cycle of intergenerational illiteracy in Houston by helping adults acquire the skills to help their children learn.

LITERACY AMERICORPS

In partnership with the Coalition for National and Community Service and the National Institute for Literacy, the HRC's team of Literacy AmeriCorps members provide the gift of learning while building skills of their own. members provide

instructional and mentoring support to at-risk youth and adults, educational programming and school-readiness support through family literacy programs, substance abuse training to at-risk youth and independent living assistance to homeless families. In 1995-96, 30 corps members are working at 15 community-based literacy programs throughout Greater Houston. In return for their year of service, corps members receive a living allowance and an educational award.

WOMEN MOVING UP

The mission of the Women Moving Up (WMU) Program is to empower women to ensure that each student in the program gains the knowledge and awareness to prepare her to become an economically self-sufficient citizen by focusing on the greater job opportunities available to women especially in non-traditional careers. It is essential that WMU provide students with information on available training enabling women to be prepared for the full spectrum of careers available in the Houston economy.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

The HRC manages a team of four full-time Technical Assistance Specialists. Three specialists are assigned to literacy provider agencies while the fourth serves as a liaison between literacy service providers and homeless shelters. The role of the Technical Assistance Specialist is to increase the quality of literacy instruction and availability of services throughout the coalition of more than 80 literacy providers and homeless shelters. Technical Assistants provide expertise in literacy instruction, accountability, staff training, volunteer recruitment and student/program assessment.

TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE

The Teacher Training Institute is a collaboration between the HRC and Houston Community College System designed to coordinate and provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers of adult education and literacy providers. Trainings serve to strengthen and enhance the capabilities of staff and volunteers so client needs are met most effectively. Past session topics have included techniques for teaching adult basic education, communications and multicultural awareness, portfolio assessment and building workplace skills.

LITERACY RESOURCE CENTER

The HRC maintains a Literacy Resource Center to ensure that tutors, instructors and volunteers of community-based literacy providers have access to the latest in adult education. The purpose of the resource center is twofold: to provide educators with easy access to information that will help them enhance their teaching skills and to help ensure that client needs are met most effectively.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SYSTEM

The Houston READ Commission's Information and Referral (I&R) System continues to operate in the community-based organizations in partnership with the Houston READ Commission / Houston Community College collaboration.

The I&R System tracks data on students and volunteers and maintains up-to-date information on literacy providers and their locations. The system contains tables for adding student and tutor information, updating provider data, calculating score reports for the National Literacy Act grant, and determining the number of student and volunteer calls received each day.

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Programs & Services

HOUSTON READ COMMISSION
SPEAKER'S BUREAU & COMMUNITY AWARENESS TEAM

Speeches by trained volunteers are available on the following subjects:

- Houston's Literacy Dilemma: A Solvable Problem
- Literacy is Your Business (directed to Houston's Business Community)
- Family Literacy: An Intergenerational Solution

Volunteer speakers are available to deliver presentations to educational groups, community and civic groups, local businesses, church organizations and others. As part of this effort, volunteers are also available to man booths at community and volunteer fairs.

The Speaker's Bureau & Community Awareness Team is designed to assist the Houston READ Commission in its efforts to raise awareness of our city's and state's severe literacy problem. In Texas, 52% of adult Texans are identified as functionally illiterate, and Texas ranks 47th of the 50 states with the most serious illiteracy problem according to the US Department of Education. In the Greater Houston area alone, the Texas Adult Literacy Survey has identified more than one million functionally illiterate adults.

There exists a tremendous need to generate awareness of this very solvable problem to ensure community support through volunteer efforts, the establishment of literacy programs and the donations of funds, materials and in-kind support.

Those interested in securing speakers for their group or arranging for community/volunteer booths are encouraged to call the Houston READ Commission at 845-2426. At least one week notice is requested.

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Houston READ Commission

Programs & Services

Houston READ Commission: The Teacher Training Institute

The Teacher Training Institute, a joint effort of the Houston Community College System and the Houston READ Commission, in 1995 expanded both the number of training sessions offered and the geographic area it serves. Through efforts of Mr. Brad Davis, Assistant Dean and Director of Adult Education for Houston Community College, and Dr. Frank Jackson, Deputy Director of the Commission, the Teacher Training Institute service area has been expanded to include those adult education and literacy service areas contiguous to the Houston READ Commission/HCCS service area.

In addition to expanding geographic coverage, the Institute also significantly expanded the number of persons served and its offerings. In the 1994 -1995 fiscal year, the Institute offered 32 training sessions, two ESL institutes of 30 hours each, four 12-hour tutor training sessions and four teleconferences. A total of 136 hours of training were offered by the following members of the Texas Education Agency Staff Development Consortium: Project Forward (22 hours); Texas A&M - Kingsville ESL Project (60 hours); University of Texas - San Antonio (36 hours, Region XX Special Project (3 hours); Southwest Texas State University (12 hours); and Baylor University (3 hours). Through a special collaborative effort with the Literacy Consortium of Houston, six hours of training were offered in family literacy. A total of 1,428 people, including volunteers, paid instructional staff and administrators, were trained by the Institute. A total of 244 hours of instruction was offered to adult literacy practitioners in Greater Houston.

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Programs & Services

LEARNING CENTERS

Demonstration Projects and Learner Gains

BAYLAND LEARNING CENTER

Enrollment: 382
- Basic Skills: 67
- ESL: 156
- Pre-GED: 74
- GED: 85

GED Graduates: 77 (includes some Pre-GED)
Volunteer Hours: 2,792
Average Grade Gain: 2.4 Grade Levels
Retention Rate: 88%

Manager: Beckie Martin
6400 Bissonnet
Houston, Texas 77074

ARAMCO LEARNING CENTER

Enrollment: 149
- Basic Skills: 28
- ESL: 62
- Pre-GED: 26
- GED: 33

GED Graduates: 22
Volunteer Hours: 422
Average Grade Gain: 3.0 Grade Levels
Retention Rate: 80%

Manager: Wendell Webster
4665 N. Braeswood
Houston, Texas 77096

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GOOD NEIGHBOR LEARNING CENTER

Enrollment: 272
- Basic Skills: 44

ESL: 184
Pre-GED: 36
GED: 8
GED Graduates: 6
Volunteer Hours: 2,484
Average Grade Gain: 2.8 Grade Levels
Retention Rate: 89%

Manager: Rita Balthazar
277 West Gray
Houston, Texas 77019

PALM CENTER LEARNING CENTER

Enrollment: 328
Basic Skills: 202
ESL: 39
Pre-GED: 67
GED: 20
GED Graduates: 8
Volunteer Hours: 510
Average Grade Gain: 2.3 Grade Levels
Retention Rate: 78%

Manager: Rosie Canales
5340 Griggs Road
Houston, Texas 77021

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS/WESLEY ELEMENTARY

Enrollment: 34
Basic Skills: 14
ESL: 7
Pre-GED: 13
GED Graduates: N.A.
Volunteer Hours: 69
Average Grade Gain: 2.0 Grade Levels
Retention Rate: 67%

Manager: Patricia Cunningham
800 Dillard
Houston, Texas 77091

STAR OF HOPE LEARNING CENTER

(at Transitional Living Center)
Clients Served: 764
Client Contact Hours: 6,922

Client Contact Hours: 6,922
Volunteer Hours: 1,132
Parents Attending Parenting Sessions: 234
Residents Attending Quarterly Programs: 205

Manager: Jim Goggin
5013 Calhoun
Houston, Texas 77004

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

WOMEN MOVING UP

Enrollment: 395
Completing Phase I: 100%
(involves identifying learner's education, work/volunteer skills, career interest, and barriers and limitations)
Completing Phase II: 85%
(involves a career assessment and gaining information about preferred work styles, values and the work environment)
Students in Mentoring Program: 246

Coordinator: Gwen Ward

TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE

Training Sessions: 82
Hours of Training: 220
Teachers/Volunteers Trained: 1,428
(A joint partnership between Houston READ Commission and Houston Community College System)

Coordinator: Marion Rucktashel

LITERACY AMERICORPS

Corps Members: 30
Community-Based Sites: 15
Hours of Service: 34,200
Students Served: 800
GED Graduates: 35

Coordinator: Jeannett Manzanero

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HOMELESS SERVICES
Literacy Liaison Services: 42 Shelters
On-Site Lifeskills Instruction: 14 Shelters / 232 Clients
On-Site Literacy Instruction: 4 Shelters / 72 Clients

Homeless Liaison: Lizzy Hargrove

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